

Dewhurst St Mary CE Primary School



'Let Your Light Shine' Matthew 5:16

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy 2021-2023

Introduction

At Dewhurst St Mary, we are committed to supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers). We recognise that mental health and emotional wellbeing is just as important to our lives as physical health. At Dewhurst St Mary we endeavour to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress. We aim to ensure that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

How the policy was developed

This policy has been created through consultation with the school community. In developing the policy we have taken account of:

- Healthy Young Minds in Herts
- Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing, Public Health England 2015
- Anna Freud school staff wellbeing

Links to other policies

This policy links to our Child Protection Policy, Anti Bullying, SEND Offer and our Positive Behaviour Policy. It draws on our whole school use of Herts Steps, a therapeutic approach to behaviour management that aims to use training and resources to understanding the causes of behaviours, rather than a focus on the behaviours themselves.

Teaching about mental health

At Dewhurst St Mary we take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to work in a proactive way to avoid problems arising. We do this by:

- Creating and applying consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
- Adhering to Herts Steps therapeutic approach to behaviour management.
- Focusing on the 5 steps to wellbeing .
- Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.

- Promoting self-esteem and ensuring children understand their importance in the World.
- Helping children to be resilient learners and to manage setbacks.
- Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
- Identifying children who have mental health challenges and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services, parents and carers.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.
- Developing an open culture where it's normal to talk about mental health.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- Providing opportunities to reflect including time within daily collective worship.
- Enabling access to appropriate support.
- Mental Health and PSHE for all year groups
- Wellbeing week and access to information around the school
- Workshops for parents and carers

Small group activities.

- Nurture Lunchtime group to focus on mental health, resilience and wellbeing.
- Children to be aware that they can drop in and see our designated family support worker, Mrs Byrne, if they are anxious or worried about a certain situation/issue

Staff roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote this in and out of their classrooms.

All staff have Mental Health training with regular access to additional training materials. Supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school.

At Dewhurst St Mary we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance. Staff are supported pastorally and have access to enriched opportunities. Staff also have access to weekly drop in time with our MHST Child Wellbeing Practitioner.

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and to understand the protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help; all staff should have the skills to identify warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

Key staff supporting Mental Health at Dewhurst St Mary Primary School:

Named Mental Health Lead - Laura Munson (Assistant Head Inclusion)

Deputy Mental Health Lead - Gill Byrne (Family Support Worker)

Child Wellbeing Practitioner-Molly Webster

Our Mental Health Lead;

- Leads and works with all staff to co-ordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates.
- Liaises weekly with our 'in house' child wellbeing practitioner
- Is the first point of contact with mental health services and makes individual referrals to them.

Many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals.

Early identification

We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things from getting worse, we do this in different ways including:

- Teaching resources including: SDQ (Social difficulty questionnaire) Herts Steps Anxiety mapping and Roots and Fruits table and checklist. Advice on 'how schools can support children and young person's mental health.
- **Changes in patterns may indicate warning signs** indicating that a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. Teaching and support staff are responsible for reporting concerns about individual children to designated adults within the school.
- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstance
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Assessment, interventions and support.

All concerns are reported to the designated adults within school and needs are assessed through a triage approach with SLT, class teachers, family support worker and SEN to ensure the child gets the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service, as quickly as possible.

Working with parents and carers.

Parents or carers can approach their child/children's class teacher if they have mental health concerns. This will be cascaded to the Mental Health Lead for assessment. To support parents and carers we will be:

- Organising workshops and presentations on mental health, anxiety, resilience and 5 steps to wellbeing. Work closely with BCW and MHST regarding specific workshops.
- Share ideas about how parents and carers can support positive mental health in their children.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics taught in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this at home

When a concern has been raised, Mental Health Lead will:

- Contact parents to discuss the outcome of any assessment (Although there may be cases, parents and carers cannot be involved due to child protection issues.)
- Discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies.
- Signpost parents to further information or provide resources to take away.
- Create a chronology of actions and events
- Agree mental health care and protection plan where appropriate including clear next steps.
- Discuss how parents can support their child through strategies or signposts to parenting support groups.

Working with specialist services

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing. Your child may be referred, with your consent, to one of the following services for additional support.

- MHST
- BCW
- CAMHS
- School Nursing Service
- Children's Services.
- Therapists
- Educational psychology services